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# A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE CIVIL WAR

*For those who suffered and endured,  
April 10, 1863, was far from  
an ordinary day.*

**By Robert L. Willett, Jr.**



BRIEF GLANCE AT THE LENGTH of the Civil War indicates that it spanned 1,458 days from the firing on Fort Sumter to the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia's surrender at Appomattox. A more detailed study shows that only some 120 to 150 of those days could be considered significant. It is clear that the vast majority of the war was made up of ordinary days that were endured simply in order to arrive at the next day of significance. Despite increased interest in the war, these ordinary days have been largely ignored. To the soldiers and civilians who survived their passing, however, these days could be just as momentous as their more historically significant counterparts. A good example of one such ordinary day is Friday, April 10, 1863.

There was a small engagement that day near Franklin, Tennessee, a town more usually associated with the larger battle that took place there in November 1864. On April 10, 1863, Franklin was occupied by Union Maj. Gen. Gordon Granger's nearly eight thousand troops of the Army of the Cumberland. The town served as an outpost that the Federals used to protect their supply lines from the almost five thousand Confederate cavalymen of Maj. Gen. Earl Van Dorn camped just to the south at Spring Hill, Tennessee. Among Van Dorn's subordinates was the famous Confederate horseman Brig. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest.

On the tenth, Van Dorn decided to test Franklin's defenses with three thousand of his cavalymen. The Confederate troopers who clattered northward out of Spring Hill were in no particular hurry; one force commanded by Forrest proceeded up the Lewisburg Pike, while

to the west Van Dorn took another column straight up the Columbia Pike. Later, the Confederate commander indicated that he thought the Federals had abandoned the town, so his approach was more casual than normal. As the cavalry commander neared Franklin, however, a volley from pickets of the Fortieth Ohio Infantry halted his lead elements. Most of the Union troops were in a partially completed fort on the east side of the Harpeth River, which flowed around the city, but the Fortieth Ohio Infantry was on the west side of the river, guarding the approaches to the town, and were the first to sight Van Dorn's cavalry.<sup>1</sup>

The Rebels responded to this unexpected burst of Federal fire with a charge led by the First Mississippi followed by the Twenty-eighth Mississippi and Fourth Tennessee bringing up the rear. The Ohioans stood their ground, inflicting the heaviest casualties on the Twenty-eighth, which had seventeen men killed, fourteen wounded, and ten captured. Van Dorn's cavalry charge was broken and the Fortieth retreated to the shelter of the Harpeth's banks to await reinforcements.<sup>2</sup> One of the reinforcements, Charles Cort of the Ninety-second Illinois Infantry, later wrote: "When we got to the pontoon bridge we found the enemy had been closer than we thought. They made a very bold dash. Charged the pickets that were very strong but were repulsed three times, broke through and dashed through the town. Five of them headed by a major, rode to the pontoon bridge, which is within 300 yards of the fort. The guard at the bridge fired, killing three and wounding the other two. The major's horse fell and he was taken prisoner. They must have been drunk!"<sup>3</sup>

After being checked by the Fortieth's fire, Van Dorn called off his attack and regrouped south of Franklin. Meanwhile, Forrest continued to move north, his division strung out for several miles along the Lewisburg Pike. As the Fortieth Ohio was firing away at the Confederate cavalry, General Granger devised a plan to cut off Van Dorn's column south of Franklin and began issuing orders to Maj. Gen. David Stanley's newly arrived sixteen-hundred-man cavalry force.<sup>4</sup>

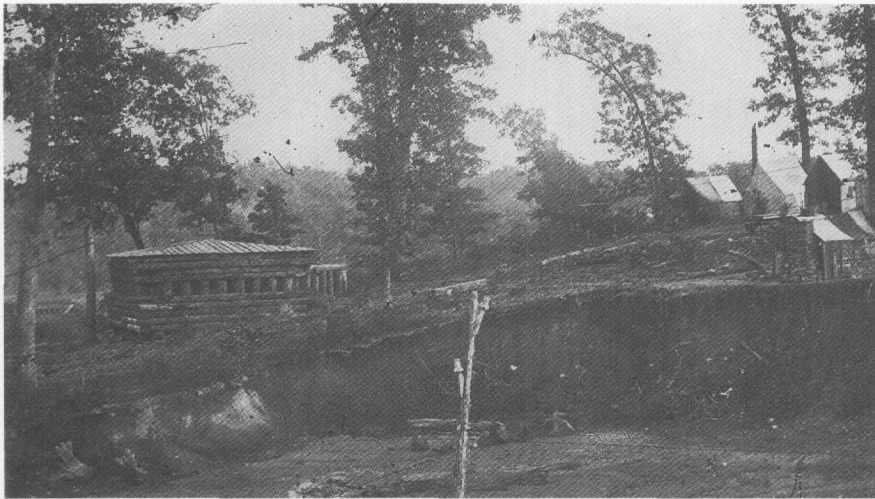
Stanley had reported to Franklin the previous night and been sent to camp on the east side of the Harpeth River. As soon as Granger heard the fighting in town he sent word to Stanley to cross the river, head south and cut off Van Dorn. But even before his orders arrived, Stanley heard the firing and crossed the river, not planning to cut off the Southerners but to join the fight in town. As he took his two brigades across the Harpeth his lead regiment, the Fourth U.S. Cavalry,

charged Forrest's strung-out column. The dash caught Captain Sam Freeman's Confederate artillery battery by surprise. In minutes the Federal cavalry had captured four guns along with Freeman and thirty-six of his men. The victory was short-lived, however, as the Southern regiments in front of and behind Freeman heard the firing and wasted little time in coming to his aid. In the subsequent melee, Freeman was shot and killed by one of the Fourth's troopers. He was reportedly shot because—being somewhat corpulent—he could not move as fast as his captors, but the Confederates saw his death as a vicious murder.<sup>5</sup>

The fight around Franklin ended with Stanley recrossing the Harpeth and Van Dorn plodding unhappily back to Spring Hill. Van Dorn made no report of his casualties, but the Twenty-eighth Mississippi did record their losses—some forty-one killed and wounded. It is not surprising that Van Dorn, a ladies' man, made no report; only a few weeks after the battle a jealous husband killed him. Forrest, however, made a detailed report of his division's losses—five troopers killed, thirty-two wounded, and thirty-three captured. Union reports listed sixteen men killed, twenty wounded, and twenty-seven captured. A total of 174 men were casualties of this brief fight.<sup>6</sup>

Van Dorn's troopers were not the only Southern cavalry pestering Federals on April 10. Major General Joseph Wheeler was proving that while Federals might control the cities of middle Tennessee, the countryside belonged to Confederate cavalry. Wheeler set out early on the tenth to destroy two Union trains supplying the Army of the Cumberland. One force went north of Nashville to the south bank of the Cumberland River to ambush a train near Neeley's Bend, while a second force went southeast of Nashville to wreck a train traveling from Murfreesboro to Nashville. The raiders near Neeley's Bend had only a short wait before the Nashville-bound locomotive was heard, and the trap was sprung. Wheeler's artillery commenced firing, and one of their first rounds hit the boiler of the train, several other shells also found their mark, and the train came to a stop. Having no chance against the Rebel guns, guards from the Twenty-third Michigan Infantry moved away and left the train burning, its cargo of horses and cattle screaming pitifully as additional shells crashed into the cars. The raid left one Federal soldier mortally wounded and one slightly injured; there were no Southern casualties.<sup>7</sup>

Meanwhile, the Murfreesboro-Nashville train was guarded by men from Company E, Tenth Michigan, who were relaxing as the train



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*Union blockhouses, such as this one on the Nashville & Chattanooga Railroad, were constructed to protect rail lines from Confederate cavalry raiders.*

approached Nashville. They had shepherded a morning train on its run to Murfreesboro and were headed back to their camp when Confederate volleys crashed into their train near Lavergne, Tennessee. As the first Rebel shots were fired, the train stopped and the Unionists retreated toward a nearby blockhouse leaving a number of dead and wounded by the cars. One of the first hit was Lieutenant Frank Vanderburgh, a twenty-four-year-old from Port Huron, Michigan. Soon after dismounting from the train he went down with a wound, rose, was hit again, yet still struggled to his feet.<sup>8</sup> One of the attackers, Roger Turner of Terry's Texas Rangers, wrote, "A Yankee officer... was getting over the fense [*sic*]. One of the old 11th [Texas Cavalry] was after him and ordered him to surrender but he only replied by hacking at him with his sword, and Texas dropped him in a fense [*sic*] corner with his six shooter."<sup>9</sup>

After the brief fight, the Confederates ransacked the cars, took prisoners, set fire to the train, and left with their loot and prisoners before a Federal counterattack could be organized. The spoils of the raid were considerable. The mail sacks the Confederates captured were filled with personal and official correspondence and also contained thirty thousand dollars. While the Confederates' material gains were impressive, the price in human life was also considerable. Company E lost eight men killed or mortally wounded (including Lieutenant Vanderburgh, who died on April 18), eight wounded, and fifteen cap-

tured. Another Union officer, Lieutenant John R. Henry of the First Alabama Cavalry (Union), a passenger on the train, was also killed. In addition to the Federal casualties, two Confederate prisoners on their way to eastern prison camps met their death in the incident—the only Confederate casualties.<sup>10</sup>

In the east, things were reasonably quiet. President Abraham Lincoln was visiting the Army of the Potomac in its winter camp north of Fredericksburg, Virginia. Lincoln spent six days watching 130,000 men pass in review and tried to gauge the mood of the army after the terrible Battle of Fredericksburg, which cost the North more than twelve thousand casualties. The president was evidently affected by the sight of so many passing troops. One soldier who saw the president recorded: "...as Mr. Lincoln rode by, I noticed he was weeping. Why he wept I know not—whether he was thinking of how many had fallen, or how many will soon fall. It might be neither. But this I do know: under that homely exterior is as tender a heart as ever throbbed, one that is easily moved toward the side of the poor and downtrodden. He is probably aware that a battle cannot long be deferred." As Lincoln reviewed the troops, Confederate soldiers from the Army of Northern Virginia watched the spectacle with interest from the hills on the south bank of the Rappahannock River.<sup>11</sup>

General Robert E. Lee was with his army at Fredericksburg, his force reduced because one of his corps commanders, Lt. Gen. James Longstreet, had taken the brigades of Maj. Gens. George Pickett and John Hood to southeastern Virginia to collect supplies. Longstreet had been instructed to protect Richmond, gather forage and food for Lee's army, and return to the Army of Northern Virginia when the Union Army began its spring offensive. To prevent harassment from Federal troops along the coast, Longstreet sent Pickett and Hood toward Suffolk, Virginia, and Maj. Gen. D. H. Hill, commanding the Department of North Carolina, toward New Bern, North Carolina, to bottle up Union troops in those port garrisons.<sup>12</sup>

Part of Longstreet's strategy called for laying siege to Washington, North Carolina, and Hill had invested and then commenced shelling the town at the end of March. On April 10, Washington was again bombarded by Confederate artillery. Although there were no casualties from artillery fire that day, disease continued to take its toll on the Federal troops cooped up in the town. Dr. Robert Ware, surgeon of the Forty-fourth Massachusetts, died, prompting one of his patients,

Corporal Zenas T. Haines, to write home: "One week ago no event could have been more unexpected by us....Dr. Ware was the embodiment of physical health."<sup>13</sup> The Washington siege continued until April 15, when Federal ships carrying the Fifth Rhode Island Regiment ran up the Pamlico River and forced Hill to withdraw.

Meanwhile, north of the Carolina town, other Confederates commanded by General Longstreet took up positions outside Suffolk, Virginia. The town's importance came from its proximity to the vital Union port of Norfolk to the north. Union commanders were concerned that the Confederates were planning to take advantage of Norfolk's small garrison and make a move to recapture the naval base. Longstreet was actually pondering an attack on Suffolk, but, in keeping with his original orders, he decided to simply lay siege to the town and seal off the Union troops there. The Confederates settled into their siege lines and began to harass the Federals with occasional raids and artillery fire while they scoured the countryside for provisions. The presence of Confederate troops in the area seemed to have an unnerving effect on one Union railroad engineer. On the tenth a Federal train headed to Suffolk from Norfolk slipped off the tracks near Deep Creek, killing the engineer and Captain Isaac P. Bowditch of Connecticut and closing the railroad for the remainder of the day.<sup>14</sup>

Picket duty was universal in all army camps, and the soldiers of both sides tended to make their own rules to govern this burdensome task. Outside Suffolk on April 10, pickets from the Eleventh Mississippi accepted a Federal invitation to cross a lake to Union lines and swap stories, tobacco, newspapers, and coffee. A Union officer happened by, and told the men to cease fraternizing or he would open fire on the group. According to a Confederate participant, "another officer standing near us remarked, 'Boys, don't pay any attention to that d\_\_\_ fool. They know better than to fire into their own men. We will see that none of you are harmed and are put back safe on your side of the lake.'" After a while, the soldiers of both sides shook hands, said goodbye, and return safely to their lines.<sup>15</sup> The siege did not end until May 4, 1863, causing Longstreet to miss the Battle of Chancellorsville.

A third part of Longstreet's plan called for an attack by the Fifty-ninth Virginia Infantry on Union forces farther north at Gloucester Point and Williamsburg. Gloucester Point was a coastal installation linked tenuously to Federal positions at Jamestown, Yorktown, Williamsburg, and Norfolk. Early on the tenth the Virginians attacked Gloucester. It was

more a demonstration than a serious attack, but they succeeded in killing one Federal soldier, wounding two, and capturing two others while sustaining two of their own wounded.<sup>16</sup>

Farther down the coast in South Carolina, the Union Navy had suffered a serious defeat three days previously. On the seventh, Rear Adm. Samuel Du Pont had taken his South Atlantic Blockading Squadron into Charleston Harbor, hoping to subdue the area forts. After less than two hours of combat, he withdrew his ships, having lost USS *Keokuk* and having had several other vessels damaged. His ironclads were no match for the forts defending the harbor.<sup>17</sup>

Soldiers of Union Maj. Gen. David Hunter's Department of the South were also in the Charleston area, occupying several islands outside the harbor. On the evening of April 10, a Confederate raiding party attacked the One Hundredth New York Infantry on Folly Island, fatally wounding Corporal Charles Sabine and capturing Private John MacDonald. One of the One Hundredth's supporting units was the First New York Marine Artillery. Their conduct was noted in an after-battle report by the regiment's colonel, George B. Dandy: "They [the Confederates] were first perceived by the detachment of Marine Artillery, who disgracefully abandoned their pieces, leaving their officer, Lt. Sands, alone with them." On April 29, 1863, Sabine died of his wounds; MacDonald died of "delirium tremens" on March 27, 1864, after being exchanged. The Confederates suffered no casualties in the skirmish.<sup>18</sup>

Other Southern troops in the area met a different fate. USS *Kingfisher* heard reports of isolated Confederate pickets on outpost duty on Edisto Island and sent out a landing party that captured nine sentinels of the Third South Carolina Infantry. The only Union casualty was Ensign Rhodes, a surgeon who was shot in the foot. The prisoners were all sons of wealthy South Carolina families, and an effort was made by General Hunter to hold them as hostages for future negotiations, but the nine were later regularly exchanged.<sup>19</sup>

Farther down the coast, in Savannah, Georgia, the first of the day's two executions took place. Private Michael Kiener, First Georgia Sharpshooters, was executed for desertion, complicated by the supposedly accidental discharge of his rifle while being captured. In his plea for mercy, Kiener wrote: "An evil spirit came over me and I did that which ought not to have been done. But, sir, a vessel dashed to pieces cannot be repaired." President Jefferson Davis denied the plea, and Kiener died before the firing squad early that morning.<sup>20</sup>

Farther to the north in Richmond, Virginia, Union Captain Alphonso C. Webster was hanged for violation of his parole. Webster was a restless character who had enlisted in the Regular Army before the war but deserted in 1861 and joined a New York cavalry regiment. After his enlistment he was court-martialed and resigned. He then switched his allegiance and became a mail carrier for the Confederacy. For unknown reasons he again changed loyalties



ROBERT L. WILLET, JR. COLLECTION

*Captain Alphonso C. Webster*

and resumed wearing Union blue as a drillmaster in a group called the First Independent Loudoun County (Virginia) Rangers. He was wounded and captured at Waterford, Virginia, in August 1862 and paroled soon thereafter. Not long after rejoining his regiment Webster again deserted and attempted to join a Confederate unit. He was recognized from the Waterford fight, however, labeled as a Unionist, and taken to Castle Thunder prison in Richmond. He was scheduled to be hung on April 3 but wrote to President Jefferson Davis, "I feel assured, Sir, that when the Angel of Peace returns to earth and shall again spread his white wings over the bleached land, the clash of arms shall be hushed, and the independence of your government secured, it will never be a cause for regret to your Excellency if in merciful exercise of your parogitive [*sic*] you grant me a further respite of my poor life." His eloquence merely gained him a one-week reprieve. While suffering from two broken legs—the result of an attempted escape—Webster was strapped to a chair and hung at 12:45 P.M., April 10, 1863.<sup>21</sup>

Back in the West, the clashes at Franklin, Neeley's Bend, and LaVergne proved to be the violent exceptions to a generally peaceful day. Most of the Union Army of the Cumberland had been camped around Murfreesboro since the Battle of Stones River, little more than three months before, and faced the equally inactive Confederate Army of Tennessee. The opposing forces marched, drilled, paraded, reviewed, went on picket duty, and generally left their foe in peace while waiting for the next fight.



One of the biggest soldiers' complaints during this period of relative inactivity concerned the slowness of the mail. On April 12, Union Lieutenant Alfred Lacey Hough wrote his wife: "I have yours of April 5th this morning, it made quite a quick trip, and most welcome it is. You say my last was dated March 23rd, I don't see how it is that letters from here are so irregular, it is the complaint of the whole army that letters from the army are very slow and frequently miscarry, while letters to the army rarely fail."<sup>22</sup>

Union Brig. Gen. James A. Garfield was also affected by the inconsistency of mail delivery. He complained to his wife Lucretia on the tenth: "Yours of the 6th is this moment read. I am greatly distressed that my letters should not reach you."<sup>23</sup> Garfield had recently become chief of staff for Maj. Gen. William S. Rosecrans, then commanding the Army of the Cumberland. Garfield assured his wife that the army was ready to move against the Confederates. Such was not the case; the army would not move from its Murfreesboro camps until June.<sup>24</sup>

While the men idled, General Garfield became involved with another project, a foray into Alabama to cut the Confederate Army of Tennessee's main supply line, the railroad that ran between Chattanooga and Atlanta. Colonel Abel D. Streight, formerly an Indianapolis publisher, had presented a plan to Garfield and Rosecrans that called for a raid to sever the railroad near Rome, Georgia. The plan was approved, and on the tenth Streight loaded up his provisional brigade—four infantry regiments with seventeen hundred men and eight hundred mules—and left Nashville by boat on his adventure. The brigade was pursued, harassed, and finally defeated by the Southern "Wizard of the Saddle"—General Forrest—on May 3, nearly a month after his fight at Franklin. Streight surrendered almost all of his men to Forrest's division (by then only about five hundred troopers) twenty miles short of his goal of Rome.<sup>25</sup>

In Tullahoma, Tennessee, on April 10, the Army of Tennessee's commander, General Braxton Bragg, was having command problems. Bragg had two corps commanders, Lt. Gens. Leonidas Polk and William J. Hardee, who had little confidence in their commander. Hardee had committed the cardinal sin of breaching the chain of command to write President Davis.<sup>26</sup> Hardee survived the war, but Polk was not so lucky. In September 1863 he was court-martialed by Bragg for allegedly failing to attack when ordered to do so at Chickamauga, but was killed the following June before the court convened. Bragg was relieved of his command by General Joseph Johnston in February 1864.<sup>27</sup>

Far removed from the politics of their high command, the Southern rank and file spent their days much like their nearby Federal counterparts. Colonel Taylor Beatty wrote, "Rode out to a review of Hardee's Corps today [the tenth]—the troops did very well—A great many spectators, especially ladies—for whom Genl. Hardee has given the entertainment—he has several at his house—and this is the second or third time they have come up from Huntsville."<sup>28</sup>

While most of the two opposing armies in Tennessee were in their respective camps on April 10, elsewhere in the state, at Waverly, Confederate Major Horace J. Blanton was scouting for horses and recruits for his unit when he was surprised by horsemen of the Fifth Iowa Cavalry. The major and twenty of his men were captured; there were no Union casualties.<sup>29</sup>

Another skirmish involved Confederate Major James W. Caldwell and his Second Kentucky Cavalry. While on patrol Caldwell's unit was ambushed and pursued by elements of the 118th Ohio Infantry near Germantown, Kentucky. In the chase and subsequent skirmish, Confederate Lieutenant F.N. Daniels was killed and three men were wounded or captured. The 118th suffered one casualty during the fight and one casualty later in the day from friendly fire when Private Wesley McMillen was fatally shot by pickets of the Fifteenth Indiana Light Artillery while returning from a scouting mission.<sup>30</sup>

Elsewhere, the Seventh Illinois Cavalry left its encampment near LaGrange, Tennessee, and headed south into northern Mississippi in search of Rebels. They were able to capture James Hoy of the Second Arkansas Cavalry and Nathan Baldwin of the Eighteenth Mississippi. Baldwin would remain a prisoner until paroled on June 2. Hoy, who had been captured earlier in the war and paroled, was sent to St. Louis where he became ill. He died in East Alton, Illinois, on June 17, 1863.<sup>31</sup>

While the Seventh Illinois inflicted few Confederate casualties, they were successful in their other mission to destroy crops, burn houses, and generally create havoc. Their success is evidenced by Confederate Brig. Gen. Stephen D. Lee's report: "They did not leave a particle of anything for the planters to subsist on, but said they intended to destroy everything this side of Greenville [Mississippi]."<sup>32</sup>

On the other side of the Mississippi River, Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's army was continuing its engineering efforts against the besieged city of Vicksburg, digging canals and ditches to redirect the river and bypass the Confederate stronghold. On April 10 Grant was

working to connect his headquarters at Milliken's Bend, Louisiana, with the bayou system, but the effort accomplished little and Grant was depressed by the lack of progress. "The long, dreary, and...heavy and continuous rains and high water...was one of great hardship to all engaged about Vicksburg," he wrote after the war.<sup>33</sup> He had developed a new strategy that was in motion on this Friday—moving his army down the west side of the Mississippi. He intended to cross the river below Vicksburg, then swing east and north to cut off supplies coming from the east. This difficult maneuver had to be accomplished while facing enemy soldiers that were described by a private in Grant's Seventh Missouri Infantry as "half horse half alligator with a touch of snapping turtle."<sup>34</sup>

Meanwhile, Confederate commanders in Vicksburg were baffled by reports that Grant was moving men to Tennessee to reinforce the Army of the Cumberland near Murfreesboro. Confederate Colonel J.A.W. Johnson wrote, "The army here is in fine condition, we're almost spiling [*sic*] for a fight. To my mind there is but little prospect of an infantry fight."<sup>35</sup> So many reports of troops marching away from Vicksburg had surfaced that Southern confidence was soaring. An ominous telegram, however, came to Brig. Gen. John S. Bowen in Grand Gulf, Mississippi, from Lt. Gen. John Pemberton: "Gen. Stevenson telegraphs this morning the enemy captured steamer *Clarke* at the mouth of Red River yesterday, also that picket, on authority of a citizen, reports enemy landing a considerable force at New Carthage [Louisiana, downriver from Vicksburg]."<sup>36</sup>

Grant's efforts had affected life in Vicksburg in many ways; the residents especially resented the disruption of their mail service. They could wait months for news of loved ones, as evidenced by a tragic footnote to Kate Stone's April 10 diary entry: "Brother Walter died February 15, 1863 at Cotton Gin, Mississippi. Again has God smitten us, and this last is almost more than we can bear. I can hardly believe that our bright, merry little Brother Walter has been dead for seven weeks. And we cannot realize that he is gone forevermore. Even peace will not restore him to us at all. It is hard, hard that he should have to go so full of life and happiness and with such promise of a noble manhood."<sup>37</sup> Vicksburg would finally fall to Grant on July 4, 1863.

As the Federals' Vicksburg operations intensified, a separate Union army was beginning a move in southern Louisiana. On the tenth, troops from the Department of the Gulf commanded by Maj. Gen.

Nathaniel Banks were converging on Brashear City, Louisiana, from Baton Rouge and New Orleans. The Louisiana bayous were an alien environment to most of Banks' troops, who were primarily from the Northeast, and some were not favorably impressed. Lieutenant Frank H. Peck of the Twelfth Connecticut Infantry wrote his mother: "There is only a narrow strip of land here between the bayou and the swamp and such a place for mosquitos is seldom found in this climate. We pitched our tents and slept on the ground. The next morning as we were nibbling our breakfast of hardtack and coffee it began to rain. Somebody looked at his foot and found it in the water.... Before we had finished the water had risen so that we had to put our feet on the table, and there was not a square foot in the tent not flooded inches deep."<sup>38</sup>

Banks' infantry numbered almost fifteen thousand men encamped on both sides of the Atchafalaya River. Grant hoped that these troops would be able to participate in his operations against Vicksburg, but their immediate mission was to find food and forage. The Federal soldiers in the Department of the Gulf were confined to a relatively small area around New Orleans and Baton Rouge, which provided few locally obtained provisions; most of their rations came by ship. Banks accordingly ordered a foraging expedition to relieve the shortage and monotony of the government-issue food.<sup>39</sup>

Major General Richard Taylor, son of former U.S. President Zachary Taylor, opposed Banks. The Confederate commander was an innovative and courageous officer whose force was fewer than four thousand men. To thwart Banks, Taylor moved to Fort Bisland, a run-down and neglected fortification at Bayou Teche. A brigadier general in Taylor's command, Alfred Mouton, wrote, "On reaching...[Fort] Bisland it was ascertained that the line of entrenchments on the east bank of the Teche, corresponding with those on the west bank recently thrown up, had not even been commenced, and by the direction of the major general [Taylor] measures were immediately adopted to complete them."<sup>40</sup> The fort was completed, and Taylor held Banks in check for a few days. Though Banks eventually accomplished his foraging mission, Taylor delayed Banks long enough to prevent him from helping the Union army at Vicksburg, much to Grant's displeasure.<sup>41</sup>

In the far West, Union troops were scattered all the way from the Mississippi to the Pacific Ocean, while the Confederates, commanded by Lt. Gen. Kirby Smith, were all in the Department of the Trans-

Mississippi, which was comprised of Texas, Indian Territory, Arkansas, Missouri, and western Louisiana. The majority of the conflicts in this area revolved around the Indians. Many of them initially had sided with the South, hoping that they would receive better treatment than the United States had given them during previous treaties and campaigns. But by April 1863, they were just as disenchanting with the Confederacy as they had been with the United States. Lieutenant J.A. Scales of the Second Cherokee Regiment (CSA) said: "The simple truth is we have been very badly treated by the officers of the Confederate States in withholding our pay as soldiers, our clothing and in flooding the country with thousands of dollars of duplicate accounts that are today not worth fifty cents on the dollar....We have been reduced from opulence to penury, driven from our homes, endured cold and hunger and had our friends murdered by an inexorable foe."<sup>42</sup>

In Colorado Territory a detachment of the Third Colorado Cavalry set out on the tenth to locate a renegade party of Confederates. They found them at daylight on the eleventh, killed one, wounded another, and captured a third without loss. In Utah Territory a warrant was issued for the arrest of Mormon leader Brigham Young for taking another wife. He was promptly arrested but posted a two-thousand-dollar bond and was released.

Meanwhile, in other parts of the West, Union troops began to focus their attention more on the Indians than on the Confederates. In California a scout from the Second California Cavalry set out to find a renegade Indian named Joaquin Jim and caught up with him on April 10. It was reported that when "they got to the ranch and were going into the garden the Indian espied them and ran to a deep slough and swam across. Lt. Knight, with his men, rode in the slough, swam their horses across and after a race of nearly half a mile, during which he fired five shots from his pistol, three of them taking effect, which effectively stopped his further progress, sending his spirit to the land of his fathers, where he will trouble the white man no more."<sup>43</sup> The report of Joaquin Jim's death was slightly premature. A report in December 1864 from Nevada indicated he was still causing mischief at that time and had escaped from his pursuers again.

Captain Moses A. McLaughlin, also of the Second California Cavalry, filed the most chilling report of the U.S. Army's persistent and merciless treatment of Indians on April 24, 1863:

I have the honor to report that in obedience to orders dated April 10, 1863, and signed Lt. Col. Wm. Jones I left Camp Babbitt on Sunday the 12th. . . I had the bucks [men] collected together and informed Jose Chico and the citizens who had arrived that they might choose out those who they knew to be friendly. This was soon done. The boys and old men I sent back to the camps, and the others, to the number of 35, for whom noone [sic] could vouch, were either shot or sabered. Their only chance for life being their fleetness, but none escaped, though many fought well with knives, sticks, clubs and stones. This extreme punishment, though I regret it, was necessary, and I feel a few such examples will soon crush the indians and finish the war in this and adjacent valleys.<sup>44</sup>

For those serving at sea, April 10 proved to be a busy day. Union naval forces were involved in the continued blockade of Confederate ports. Four blockading squadrons were stationed off the Confederate coast. The North Atlantic Squadron, commanded by Acting Rear Adm. Samuel P. Lee, was patrolling off the coast of Virginia and North Carolina with sixty ships, almost half of which were in need of repair or totally unfit for service. Admiral Lee had two ironclads; one, *Galena*, was described by Lee as “used on picket; very dull, speed 4 to 5 knots.”<sup>45</sup>

The North Atlantic Squadron was centered at New Bern, North Carolina, and at the mouth of the Pamlico River just north of New Bern. The squadron was directing the efforts to rescue Union troops bottled up by General Hill at Washington, and three of its ships—*Commodore Hull*, *Ceres*, and *Louisiana*—moved toward that town to provide much-needed artillery support for the besieged Federals. The Southerners controlled the riverbanks between Washington and the coast, cutting off aid to the besieged Union forces, but on April 10 a small boat got through. Acting Master William G. Saltonstall reported from *Commodore Hull* that “Acting Master [Francis] Josselyn and Acting Ensign [J.P.] Da Camara arrived during the night from the lower fleet, the latter bringing through a small schooner loaded with navy ammunition.”<sup>46</sup>

The Confederate Navy was also active, launching a new ironclad to assist the Rebel effort at Suffolk. The newly constructed *City of Richmond* had been built in Richmond and was ready to descend the James River to help Longstreet, but haggling about raising Confederate river obstacles built to keep Union ships out of Southern waters prevented her departure. It was eventually decided not to raise the obstructions. Robert G.H. Kean, head of the Confederate Bureau of War, wrote in his diary, “The *Richmond* is such a stupid failure, drawing 14’ of water so that she cannot get up and down the river even if the obstructions were

open to let her pass, and as she can only steam about 3 knots, being worthless as a ram, and her machinery very defective, it is deemed unsafe for her to go down."<sup>47</sup>

Controlling the coast from South Carolina to northern Florida and commanded by Union Rear Adm. Samuel F. Du Pont, the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron had suffered mightily in the April 7 attack on Charleston. One of the Du Pont's ships, *Keokuk*, was at the bottom of Charleston Harbor and four more ironclads had suffered damage in the brief fight. On April 10 the bulk of the squadron was sailing south to Union-controlled Port Royal, South Carolina, to refit and repair damage.

Confederate blockade runners took advantage of Du Pont's weakened state. Charleston papers heralded the successful arrival of the steamer *Emma and Anna* on the tenth. Meanwhile, in Savannah, Georgia, the Confederate cruiser *Atlanta* remained in port waiting for its chance to run the Union blockade.<sup>48</sup>

A final act was played in a drama featuring USS *E.B. Hale* and *George Washington*, a ship commanded by Captain Thomas B. Briggs of the Fifth Rhode Island Artillery. The two ships were together on the night of April 9, *Washington* assisting *Hale*, which had run aground near Beauford, South Carolina. Just before dawn, *Hale* broke free and headed for its duty station, while *Washington* swung at anchor as dawn broke. The two had been anchored in the Coosaw River, but Confederate forces controlled the northern banks of the river and had their artillery trained on the Union Army ship. As the sun rose, the Confederates opened fire and after a few shots set *Washington* ablaze, causing its crew to abandon ship without ceremony. The artillery captain raised a white flag but departed the scene as fast as he could.<sup>49</sup>

The crew of *George Washington* suffered three wounded and captured, one of whom later died of burns. After capturing *Washington*, the Confederates tried to salvage one of the twenty-four-pounder cannons from the ship but were driven off. One of the Southerners involved in the action, James Barr of the Fifth South Carolina Cavalry, wrote to his family: "The day we wanted the other two [cannons], the Yankees found us out and commenced shelling us, or shelling about the wrecked steamer. At our picket post the shells could be seen coming in too well as they came in a direct course for us. The shells looked beautiful. The solid shot fell in about two hundred yards of us."<sup>50</sup>

The East Gulf Blockading Squadron had been ordered to prevent Rebel ship movements from St. Augustine, Florida, to the Florida-Alabama border, a difficult task that called for patrolling more coastline with fewer ships than its sister squadrons. The squadron was commanded by acting Rear Adm. Thomas Bailey and had twenty-three ships moving up and down the Florida coastline. They not only patrolled the offshore waters but occasionally ventured inland aboard small boats, patrolling Florida's extensive river networks. On the tenth, one such expedition was returning to its mother ship, *USS Fort Henry*, after a fruitless and frustrating eight-day search for evidence of Confederate activity. The small boats, which were launched from the Federal warships, proved to be too slow and unwieldy to catch any prey. This expedition was no exception and the boats came home empty-handed.<sup>51</sup>

Although the inland waterways were in Confederate hands, few Southern navy ships plied their waters. The exception was *CSS Chattahoochee*, nearly completed by the tenth and enjoying some sea trials on the Chattahoochee River near the Alabama-Florida border. The trip was to test the ship's capabilities, but the crew and its officers were not a happy lot. The captain, Lieutenant John J. Guthrie, was referred to as "our peacock captain" by his disgruntled second-in-command, Lieutenant Henry Gift. Gift wrote to his fiancée that "Guthrie, after much deliberation, enunciated his plan for operations, which so disgusted me with his absolute ignorance in the most commonplace matters in the art of gunnery, and use of shells I lost all interest in an affair that under other circumstances would have filled me with pleasure and excitement, and to cap the climax he spoke of the efficiency of his crew—made so by Jim's precepts and my hard work—confound him!"<sup>52</sup> The Southern ship was unlucky; it blew up and sank in May 1863, killing eighteen men, but not its captain nor Lieutenant Gift.<sup>53</sup>

The fourth Union blockading squadron was the West Gulf Blockading Squadron operating out of New Orleans and commanded by Rear Adm. David G. Farragut, whose responsibility included not only blockading the Confederate coast from Florida to Texas, but also working with the Mississippi River Squadron to free the last stretch of that river from the Confederates. Farragut's plan was to establish communication with Grant, who was some 120 miles directly north near Vicksburg, and to stop any Confederate ships from sailing up the river. On April 9, one of Farragut's vessels, *Hartford*, seized the



Southern ship *J. D. Clarke*. On April 10, CSS *Albatross* furtively crept toward *J.D. Clarke*, hoping to scuttle its captured sister.<sup>54</sup>

The Union owned the Mississippi north of Vicksburg and south of Port Hudson, Louisiana, and Grant's land forces and riverboats in the Mississippi Squadron under Rear Adm. David Porter were trying to open the river from Memphis to New Orleans. Porter was Farragut's half brother, and Farragut, Porter, and Grant worked well together. While Farragut's fleet lay outside the mouth of the Red River, Porter's ships were near the mouth of the Yazoo River preparing to run the Vicksburg batteries and bring Grant needed supplies and transports to ferry his troops across the river south of Vicksburg.

Meanwhile, with Farragut's flagship cut off from New Orleans, the senior naval officer there, Commodore Henry Morris, sent a disturbing message to Assistant Secretary of the Navy Gustavus V. Fox summarizing a number of setbacks within Farragut's squadron. Fox replied on April 6, "The Tribune says that the eighty-six years that the Navy has been in existence have not recorded so many disasters as have taken place within the last year."<sup>55</sup>

There was one minor victory for Farragut's men on April 10. The sloop USS *New London*, laying outside Sabine City on the Texas-Louisiana border, reported that at 4 A.M. it discovered a skiff going from a lighthouse toward shore. *New London* intercepted and captured the boat with its four occupants. They were the captain, second mate, and pilot of the steamer *Josiah Bell* and one Confederate soldier.<sup>56</sup>

There were other Union ships not involved with the blockade but carrying out other duties around the globe. They were chasing Confederate raiders on the Atlantic as well as carrying messages across the vast expanses of the Pacific and protecting the western shores of the United States from any unwanted Confederate attention.

Confederate naval strategy was to disrupt Union shipping crossing the Atlantic Ocean in hopes of drawing Great Britain or France into the war on the Southern side. There were a number of successful Confederate raiders that wreaked havoc on Union merchant ships, forcing insurance rates to rise and causing Federal sailors to have second thoughts about returning to sea. Two of these raiders were near Brazil on April 10, being provisioned and rested. CSS *Alabama* had already destroyed forty-one merchant ships. The vessel, commanded by Captain Raphael Semmes, was anchored near the island of Fernando de Noronha two hundred miles off the Brazilian coast and

was taking on coal, vegetables, and fresh food before continuing in search of more prizes.<sup>57</sup>

The second, *CSS Florida*, had put to sea from Mobile, Alabama, early in 1863 and was commanded by Captain John N. Maffitt. *Florida*, too, was near Fernando de Noronha and only missed *Alabama* by one day. Semmes had been treated with cordiality by Brazilian officials and had remained off the island for five days, successfully restocking his ship. Maffitt, however, was allowed to stay less than twenty-four hours, which was the normal rule for Confederate ships in neutral ports. Maffitt had to scramble to board any supplies at all. *Florida* then quietly departed in order to keep peace with Brazil.<sup>58</sup>

A third Confederate cruiser, *CSS Georgia*, was just beginning its career on April 10. Commanded by Lieutenant Lewis Maury, *Georgia* had put out to sea the previous day following its completion in Liverpool, England. Hardly in the same class as *Alabama* and *Florida*, the vessel was pessimistically described by one of its officers: "She was as absolutely unfitted for the work as any vessel could conceivably be; she lay low in the water and was very long for her beam; her engines were gear engines, that is, a large wheel fitted with lignum-vitae cogs turned the iron cogs on the shaft, and frequently the wooden cogs would break....Her sail power was insufficient, and, owing to her length, it was impossible to put her about under canvas. She was slow under either sail or steam, or both together."<sup>59</sup>

*Georgia* had a short, unsuccessful career as a raider and was later sold. *Alabama* was sunk by USS *Kearsarge* off France on June 19, 1864; *Florida* was captured at a neutral port in Brazil on October 7, 1864.<sup>60</sup>

At midnight, April 10, 1863, passed into history, leaving behind a nation at war and 271 casualties. Fifty-eight men had been killed or died of wounds; eighty-four were wounded. Some of the 129 others who were captured would not survive their imprisonment. The front lines did not change this day, and the opposing armies made no real strides toward ending the conflict. Yet this day that proved to be the exact midpoint between Fort Sumter and Appomattox was one that had to be experienced by the people of America, and to the 271 victims of April 10 and their families, there were few days of more significance. ¶

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<sup>1</sup> United States War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (hereinafter referred to as OR), ser. 1, vol. 23, pt. 1, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880–1901), 224.

<sup>2</sup> OR, ser. 1, vol. 23, pt. 1, 226.

- <sup>3</sup> Charles Edwin Cort, *Dear Friends; The Civil War Letters and Diary of Charles E. Cort* (Helyn W. Tomlinson, 1962), 2-3.
- <sup>4</sup> OR, ser. 1, vol. 23, pt. 1, 226.
- <sup>5</sup> *Atlanta Southern Confederacy*, April 16, 1863.
- <sup>6</sup> Casualty Report of Brig. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest, National Archives; OR, ser. 1, vol. 23, pt. 1, 227, 229, 231; Service Records of the Twenty-eighth Mississippi Cavalry and First Tennessee Cavalry, National Archives.
- <sup>7</sup> John Robertson, *Michigan in the War* (Lansing, Michigan: W.S. George & Co., 1882), 430.
- <sup>8</sup> OR, ser. 1, vol. 23, pt. 1, 218.
- <sup>9</sup> Frank Bachelor and George Turner, *Bachelor-Turner Letters* (Austin, Tex.: Steck Co., 1961), 48.
- <sup>10</sup> *Nashville Union*, April 14, 1863; Bachelor and Turner, *Bachelor-Turner Letters*, 48-49.
- <sup>11</sup> John West Haley, *The Rebel Yell and the Yankee Hurrah*, Ruth Silliker, ed. (Camden, Maine: Down East Books, 1985), 75.
- <sup>12</sup> OR, ser. 1, vol. 18, 902-3, 959-60, 997.
- <sup>13</sup> Zenas T. Haines, *Letters from the 44th Regt.*, MVI (Boston: Herald Job Office, 1863), 66.
- <sup>14</sup> George B. Abdill, *Civil War Railroads* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1961), 83.
- <sup>15</sup> M.J. Clarke, "On Picket in Front of Suffolk," *Confederate Veteran* 19, no. 5 (May 1911): 225.
- <sup>16</sup> OR, ser. 1, vol. 18, 261.
- <sup>17</sup> United States War Department, *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion* (hereinafter referred to as ORN) (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1894-1922), ser. 1, vol. 14, 5-8.
- <sup>18</sup> OR, ser. 1, vol. 14, 286.
- <sup>19</sup> Service Records of captured soldiers of the Third South Carolina, National Archives.
- <sup>20</sup> Michael Kiener Personnel Records, National Archives.
- <sup>21</sup> Confederate Records, National Archives.
- <sup>22</sup> Albert Lacey Hough, *Soldier in the West: Civil War Letters of Alfred Lacey Hough* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1957), 89.
- <sup>23</sup> James A. Garfield, *The Wild Life of the Army: Civil War Letters of James A. Garfield* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1964), 256.
- <sup>24</sup> OR, ser. 1, vol. 23, pt. 1, 10.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 292.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pt. 2, 728-9.
- <sup>27</sup> Mark M. Boatner III, *Civil War Dictionary*, (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1959), 658, 78.
- <sup>28</sup> Colonel Taylor Beatty Diary, April 10, 1863, Southern Historical Collections, University of North Carolina.
- <sup>29</sup> Company M, Fifth Iowa Cavalry Daily Report, National Archives.
- <sup>30</sup> 118th Ohio Infantry Daily Records and Muster Roles, National Archives; Regimental Records, Fifteenth Illinois Cavalry, National Archives.
- <sup>31</sup> OR, ser. 1, vol. 24, pt. 1, 515; Service records Baldwin and Hoy, National Archives; Regimental records, Fifteenth Illinois Cavalry, National Archives.
- <sup>32</sup> OR, ser. 1, vol. 24, pt. 1, 505.

<sup>33</sup> Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, E.B. Long ed. (originally published Sampson, Low, Marston, 1885-86; reprinted New York: De Capo Press, Inc., 1982), 458.

<sup>34</sup> David Porter, Private Papers, Library of Congress Manuscript Collection, 561.

<sup>35</sup> J.A.W. Johnson quoted in *Atlanta Southern Confederacy*, April 10, 1863, 5.

<sup>36</sup> OR, ser. 1, vol. 24, pt. 3, 731.

<sup>37</sup> Kate Stone, *Brockenburn: The Journal of Kate Stone* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1955), 186-7.

<sup>38</sup> Letter, Lieutenant Colonel Frank Henry Peck to mother, March 31, 1863, Montgomery Family Papers, Library of Congress.

<sup>39</sup> OR, ser. 1, vol. 24, pt. 3, 182-3; Allan Nevins, *The War for the Union*, vol. 2 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960) 404-5.

<sup>40</sup> OR, ser. 1, vol. 15, 396-7.

<sup>41</sup> Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, 258.

<sup>42</sup> OR, ser. 1, vol. 22, pt. 2, 822.

<sup>43</sup> OR, ser. 1, vol. 50, pt. 2, 393.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pt. 1, 208-9.

<sup>45</sup> ORN, ser. 1, vol. 8, 699.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 694.

<sup>47</sup> Robert G. H. Kean, *Inside the Confederate Government: Diary of Robert G. H. Kean, Head of the Bureau of War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), 5.

<sup>48</sup> Ships Log, *Atlanta*.

<sup>49</sup> OR, ser.1, vol. 53, pt. 1, 4-5; ORN, ser. 1, vol. 14, 116.

<sup>50</sup> Letter, James Michael Barr Letter to family, April 12, 1863, Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>51</sup> ORN, ser. 1, vol. 17, 408.

<sup>52</sup> Letter, George W. Gift to Ellen Augusta Shackleford, April 11, 1863, Ellen Gift Collection, Southern Historical Collection.

<sup>53</sup> ORN, ser. 1, vol. 17., 868-9.

<sup>54</sup> J.D. Clarke was successfully scuttled on April 11, 1863, and her machinery was removed. ORN, ser. 1, vol. 20, 765-6.

<sup>55</sup> ORN, ser. 1, vol. 24, 533.

<sup>56</sup> ORN, ser.1, vol. 20, 128.

<sup>57</sup> John M. Taylor, *Confederate Raider: Raphael Semmes of the Alabama* (McLean, VA: Brassey's, Inc., 1994), 158.

<sup>58</sup> Frank Lawrence Owsley, *C.S.S. Florida: Her Building and Operations* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1965), 63.

<sup>59</sup> James M. Morgan, *Recollections of a Rebel Reefer* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1917), 116.

<sup>60</sup> Taylor, *Confederate Raider*, 209; Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, 285.